



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT GESTATIONAL DIABETES

Self-paced Lesson



Pregnancy can be such an exciting time. It can also be a challenging time. Our overall health is always important, but especially during pregnancy when your choices are also affecting your baby. You probably have some questions and concerns about your gestational diabetes? You are not alone.

This lesson will help you to better understand what you need to know about gestational diabetes. Here are some questions you may have:

- ❖ What is gestational diabetes?
- ❖ Can I do anything about my gestational diabetes?
- ❖ What if I don't get treated for gestational diabetes?
- ❖ Most importantly, what can I do?

What is gestational diabetes?

- It is a type of diabetes, or high blood sugar, that only pregnant women get. If a woman gets pregnant and has high blood sugar, but she has never had high blood sugar before, she has gestational diabetes.

Can I do anything about my gestational diabetes?

- Yes! The good news is that gestational diabetes is treatable especially if you find out you have it early and start treatment quickly. Treating gestational diabetes greatly lowers the baby's chance of having problems.

What if I don't get treated for gestational diabetes?

- Without treatment, you are at risk for: high blood pressure, preeclampsia (a sudden, dangerous increase in blood pressure), and fetal death during the last four to eight weeks of pregnancy. These women may also have very large babies.
- As babies, children whose mothers had gestational diabetes are at higher risk for breathing problems. As they get older, these children are at higher risk for obesity, abnormal glucose tolerance, and diabetes.
- These women and their children also have a higher lifetime risk for type 2 diabetes. It may be possible to prevent type 2 diabetes through lifestyle changes.

Most importantly....what can I do?

- Most treatment plans include knowing your blood sugar level, eating a healthy diet, and getting regular physical activity. Some women also take insulin as part of their treatment plan. More and more women with gestational diabetes have healthy pregnancies and healthy babies because they follow their treatment plan and control their blood sugar.



NOW....let's talk about your pregnancy?



How much weight is an appropriate weight to gain?

- ❖ There is not one answer for this question because it varies on a woman's size before pregnancy, her height, her age, specific needs or conditions, or the number of babies she will deliver.
- ❖ Use this table to help:

Your Pre-Pregnancy Weight	Proper TOTAL Weight Gain	Weight gain during 1st Trimester
Underweight (BMI <19.8)	28-40 lbs.	5 lbs.
Normal (BMI 19.8-26)	25-35 lbs.	3.5 lbs.
Overweight (BMI>26-29)	15-25 lbs.	2.0 lbs.
Obese (BMI >29)	At least 15 lbs.	
Twins	35-45 lbs.	
Triplets	50 lbs.	

- During the 2nd and 3rd trimesters. About 1 lb. a week is appropriate. Keep in mind these are averages, as long as we are eating a balanced diet, with appropriate servings from each food group and the baby is growing well then she should be gaining the appropriate amounts.

So...how does this affect my meals and how much I should eat??

- Your diet should be based on 40-45% energy coming from carbohydrates (divided into 3 small-medium sized meals and 2-4 snacks) to keep your blood sugar regular. **Do not skip meals.**
- Some may need to eat even fewer carbohydrates and some will need to avoid most high sugar foods (pop, candy, desserts, etc.)
- You must follow your diet carefully and a nutritionist can help individualize it and make it easier. By doing so and getting exercise (as long as doctor recommends it) your pregnancy weight gain should be similar to one without diabetes.



Who's heard of the phrase, 'Eating for Two?'

- You actually don't need extra calories until about the 4th month of pregnancy and that is just about 300 additional kcals/ day. Depending on your energy needs, this usually averages about 1900-2500 kcal/ day.
- **Example A** of a healthy meal that is 300 kcals: 1 cup milk, 1 piece fruit, 1 slice whole wheat bread, and ½ cup veggies
- **Example B** of unhealthy food choices that are 300 kcals: 1 candy bar, or 1 piece of pie, or 1 piece of cake, or 20 oz. soda.

****Basically, by eating more nutrient dense foods (Example A) you can have wider variety of food choices compared to Example B.**



The GOOD NEWS is there is so much you can do to prevent complications from your gestational diabetes.

*****Remember....living and eating healthy helps you and your baby!**



We hope you enjoyed this lesson on
gestational diabetes!

Please answer the following questions. When you are done, give this
sheet to your WIC educator. Thank you!

1. Name two things you can do to help prevent complications in
gestational diabetes:
 - a.
 - b.
2. True/False. It is important that you eat 3 small-medium sized
meals and 2-4 snacks each day.
3. What are your thoughts about gestational diabetes? What can
we do here at WIC to help you?
4. What is one thing you learned that may help you during your
pregnancy?

References

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1/5/07